

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 26,
2007

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 26; that on Tuesday, following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that the Senate then resume en bloc the motions to proceed to H.R. 800 and S. 1639, with the time until 11:30 a.m. equally divided and controlled between Senators KENNEDY and ENZI or their designees; with the time from 11:30 to 11:40 a.m. reserved for the Republican leader, and the time from 11:40 to 11:50 to the majority leader; that at 11:50 a.m., without further intervening action, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 800; to be followed immediately by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 1639, as provided for under a previous order; that following the conclusion of the second vote, the Senate then stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. in order to accommodate the respective conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of Senator LUGAR, the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

A COURSE CHANGE IN IRAQ: CONNECTING IRAQ STRATEGY TO VITAL INTERESTS

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to offer observations on the continuing involvement of the United States in Iraq. In my judgment, our course in Iraq has lost contact with our vital national security interests in the Middle East and beyond. Our continuing absorption with military activities in Iraq is limiting our diplomatic assertiveness there and elsewhere in the world. The prospects that the current "surge" strategy will succeed in the way originally envisioned by the President are very limited within the short period framed by our own domestic political debate. And the strident, polarized nature of that debate increases the risk that our involvement in Iraq will end in a poorly planned withdrawal that undercuts our vital interests in the Middle East. Unless we recalibrate our strategy in Iraq to fit our domestic political conditions and the broader needs of United States national security, we risk foreign pol-

icy failures that could greatly diminish our influence in the region and the world.

The current debate on Iraq in Washington has not been conducive to a thoughtful revision of our Iraq policy. Our debate is being driven by partisan political calculations and understandable fatigue with bad news—including deaths and injuries to Americans. We have been debating and voting on whether to fund American troops in Iraq and whether to place conditions on such funding. We have contemplated in great detail whether Iraqi success in achieving certain benchmarks should determine whether funding is approved or whether a withdrawal should commence. I would observe that none of this debate addresses our vital interests any more than they are addressed by an unquestioned devotion to an ill-defined strategy of "staying the course" in Iraq.

I speak to my fellow Senators, when I say that the President is not the only American leader who will have to make adjustments to his or her thinking. Each of us should take a step back from the sloganeering rhetoric and political opportunism that has sometimes characterized this debate. The task of securing U.S. interests in the Middle East will be extremely difficult if Iraq policy is formulated on a partisan basis, with the protagonists on both sides ignoring the complexities at the core of our situation.

Commentators frequently suggest that the United States has no good options in Iraq. That may be true from a certain perspective. But I believe that we do have viable options that could strengthen our position in the Middle East, and reduce the prospect of terrorism, regional war, and other calamities. But seizing these opportunities will require the President to downsize the United States military's role in Iraq and place much more emphasis on diplomatic and economic options. It will also require Members of Congress to be receptive to overtures by the President to construct a new policy outside the binary choice of surge versus withdrawal. We don't owe the President our unquestioning agreement, but we do owe him and the American people our constructive engagement.

In my judgment, the costs and risks of continuing down the current path outweigh the potential benefits that might be achieved. Persisting indefinitely with the surge strategy will delay policy adjustments that have a better chance of protecting our vital interests over the long term.

I do not come to this conclusion lightly, particularly given that General Petraeus will deliver a formal report in September on his efforts to improve security. The interim information we have received from General Petraeus and other officials has been helpful and appreciated. I do not doubt the assessments of military commanders that there has been some progress in secu-

rity. More security improvements in the coming months may be achieved. We should attempt to preserve initiatives that have shown promise; such as engaging Sunni groups that are disaffected with the extreme tactics and agenda of al-Qaida in Iraq. But three factors—the political fragmentation in Iraq, the growing stress on our military, and the constraints of our own domestic political process—are converging to make it almost impossible for the United States to engineer a stable, multi-sectarian government in Iraq in a reasonable time frame.

First, it is very doubtful that the leaders of Iraqi factions are capable of implementing a political settlement in the short run. I see no convincing evidence that Iraqis will make the compromises necessary to solidify a functioning government and society, even if we reduce violence to a point that allows for some political and economic normalcy.

In recent months, we have seen votes in the Iraqi parliament calling for a withdrawal of American forces and condemning security walls in Baghdad that were a reasonable response to neighborhood violence. The Iraqi parliament struggles even to achieve a quorum, because many prominent leaders decline to attend. We have seen overt feuds between members of the Iraqi Government, including Prime Minister Maliki and Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, who did not speak to each other for the entire month of April. The Shia-led government is going out of its way to bottle up money budgeted for Sunni provinces. Without strident intervention by our embassy, food rations are not being delivered to Sunni towns. Iraqi leaders have resisted de-Baathification reform, the conclusion of an oil law, and effective measures to prevent oil smuggling and other corrupt practices.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari has told me that various aspects of an oil law and revenue distribution could be passed by September. But he emphasized that Iraqis are attempting to make policy in a difficult environment by broad consensus—not by majority vote. He believes other policy advancements will take considerable time, but that consensus is the safest and most appropriate approach in a fledgling democracy.

This may be true, but Americans want results in months. Meanwhile, various Iraqi factions are willing to wait years to achieve vital objectives. Even if the results of military operations improve in the coming months, there is little reason to assume that this will diminish Sunni ambitions to reclaim political preeminence or Shia plans to dominate Iraq after decades of Saddam's harsh rule. Few Iraqi leaders are willing to make sacrifices or expose themselves to risks on behalf of the type of unified Iraq that the Bush administration had envisioned. In contrast, there are many Iraqi leaders who are deeply invested in a sectarian or